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### Sermon Study on the Gospel-Lesson for the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

(Synodical Conference Series.)

JOHN 14, 1—14.\*

On Tuesday of His last week in the flesh Jesus had brought His personal public ministry to a close. It had been a busy day for Him. See Matt. 21, 20—25, 46; Mark 11, 20—13, 37; Luke 20, 1—21, 36; John 12, 20—36. In a series of controversies with His foes, held in the Temple court, He had silenced them all. His last words to them were an eightfold woe, pronounced over their hypocrisies and shams, concluding with the lament over Jerusalem for having refused Him who so often would have gathered her children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings. Matt. 23. Then, when He had left the city and was resting with His disciples on the slope of Mount Olivet, facing the city and its Temple, His all-seeing eyes swept over the future. He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and with it the end of the world in general, almost blending the two events into one. For with God there is no time as with us. 2 Pet. 3, 8. In a number of parables He sounded the warning of watchfulness to His followers. He closed with the majestic description of the final Judgment. Matt. 25.

The gospels give us no account as to what Jesus did on Wednesday. In all likelihood He spent the day in retirement with His friends at Bethany.

On Thursday, the last day before His crucifixion, we find Him in intimate communion with His chosen Twelve. It was the day of the Passover. And that was to be the last Passover under the Old Cove-

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\* The lesson of the new series for this Sunday embraces only vv. 7—14. But we do not doubt that our readers will be grateful for comments on the preceding verses also. — Ed.

nant. When Jesus had partaken of it with the Twelve in that upper chamber in Jerusalem, He instituted the holy Sacrament of His body and blood, adding the significant words: "This cup is the *new* testament in My blood." After that, while the little group was together for the last time before the Master's suffering and death,—Judas Iscariot was no longer among them,—He spoke those affectionate words of farewell which His beloved disciple John has recorded for us with great detail. John 14—17. They breathe a warmth of love and concern such as can come only from Him who is Love Divine. In striking contrast to the last words spoken to His foes He concludes His farewell to His friends with that marvelous intercessory prayer which embraces the whole Christian Church down to the end of time. John 17.

It is instructive in many ways to compare the farewell of Moses (Deut. 29—33), of Joshua (Josh. 23. 24), of Samuel (1 Sam. 12), of David (2 Sam. 23, 1—7), and of Paul (Acts 20, 17—38).

The disciples had many questions to ask. While these questions showed their deep interest in the Master's words, they revealed at the same time their woeful lack of understanding. But Jesus bore with them patiently. He knew their weakness and repeatedly referred them to the coming of the Comforter, who would lead them into all truth. John 14, 16. 17. 26; 16, 7—14.

Addressing His friends as "little children," Jesus had told them that He would be with them (in the flesh) only a little while longer. He would leave them a new commandment, that they love one another as He had loved them. This commandment is new, not in the absolute sense, but relatively. It has a new meaning and application in the days of the New Covenant, since the children of God are not bound together now by the ties of blood and nationality as was the case in the days of the Old Covenant.

At this point Simon Peter, ever impulsive, but lacking due consideration, interrupted with the question, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" And when the Master told him that he could not follow now, albeit he would follow later, Peter's impetuous zeal led him to the hasty declaration, "Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." And Jesus, no doubt looking him straight in the eye, repeated His words in the form of a searching question, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake?" Then He continued, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice." Poor Peter did not yet know himself. From Matt. 26, 33 ff. it appears that Jesus had to warn His disciple a second time with the same prophecy when they were on their way to Gethsemane. For the moment the ominous words of Jesus must have been a severe shock to His friends. They could not understand the Master at all.



But Jesus, well aware of His disciples' state of mind and knowing also that they would understand later, continued His words of love and comfort. Here our text begins.

V. 1. "*Let not your heart be troubled.*" The use of the imperative makes the words as strong as it is possible to make them. And they are not to be placed on a level with similar expressions of comfort as they often come from human lips. Spoken by the Son of God, they carry weight; they actually give what they enjoin. Though His friends may not now grasp what He is saying, and though the whole situation may be perplexing to them in the extreme, they need have no fear whatsoever. In the following sentence the πιστεύετε might in either instance be imperative or indicative. Hence four translations are possible: Believe in God and believe in Me; Ye believe in God, and ye believe in Me; Believe in God, and ye believe in Me; Ye believe in God, believe also in Me. Since the opening words of Jesus naturally raise the question, Why? the latter two translations would afford more or less difficulty of interpretation. But either of the first two will give the required answer. "Believe in God and believe in Me"; then there is no cause for worry. Or, "Ye believe in God, and ye believe in Me"; therefore there is no reason to worry. All things may be safely trusted to God; He will turn them to a blessed end. But it is significant that Jesus does not merely speak in general of faith in God. The only faith in God which is true faith and which assures final and complete happiness is the faith that takes into account His Son. See V. 6. — And the Master gives more explanation.

V. 2. "*In My Father's house are many mansions.*" *Morai*, from the verb μένω, are dwelling-places, places where one finds an abiding home. The house of the Father, which is heaven, has many such, enough for every troubled soul to find peace and rest, eternal peace and rest. After all, it is the prospect of this final goal only that effectually overcomes our troubles, because there all perplexities will be solved finally and completely. Indeed, there is no reason for the believer to fret and worry, no matter how disturbing things may appear here below. To make assurance doubly sure, the Savior adds: "But if not, I would have told you." The conditional sentence is one of the contrary-to-fact kind. Hence the underlying thought is, The many mansions are positively there; for that reason I never said otherwise. The next words: "I go to prepare a place for you" cannot well be taken as depending on εἰπον ἂν ὑμῖν. When they are so taken, the connection is this: If there were not many mansions in My Father's house, I would have said to you, I go to prepare a place for you. But since there are, I do not say, etc. That connection might be conceivable. However, it would hardly agree with the next verse. Accordingly we take the words, "I go," etc., to be a new sentence. Or if we follow the variant which introduces the clause with ὅτι, that

conjunction is not recitative, but causal. The relation is certainly causal, and we might paraphrase the verse thus: Rest assured that heaven is your abiding home. If it were not so, I would have told you. Indeed that is the very purpose of My going, to prepare a place for you. Understood in this way, the following sentence will easily be seen to carry the thought onward.

V. 3. "*And if (when) I go and prepare a place for you, I come again and shall take you to Me in order that, where I am, ye be also.*" *Ἐὰν* is sometimes used almost like *ὅταν* (Thayer). Cf. John 12, 32; 1 John 2, 28; 3, 2. The emphasis lies on the promise contained in the apodosis. There is absolutely no reason why the disciples should be uneasy about the final outcome of their situation. The heavenly rest is their goal; the going of Jesus means just this, that their rest is to be prepared for them; and He Himself will return to conduct them there in person and to have them with Him forever. There is no possibility of a slip anywhere.

But what did the Master mean when He spoke about going? V. 4. "*And where I go, ye know, and the way ye know.*" (A variant has this reading: "And where I go, ye know the way." The change is slight and does not affect the sense.) Jesus had repeatedly told His disciples all that was about to happen to Him. Cf. Luke 18, 31—34. He now reminds them of the things He has told them before, as we would say: You know what I mean. But if they remembered the words, they did not understand them any better now than when they were first spoken. And the state of mind in which they were at that hour tended to cloud their vision even more. Of course, Jesus was aware of their condition. But He would refresh their memory; or at least draw out a question, which would give Him further opportunity for more instruction.

V. 5. "*Says Thomas to Him, Lord, we do not know where Thou goest, and how can (or, according to another reading, how do) we know the way?*" This blunt statement reveals, on the one hand, the woeful ignorance or forgetfulness of the disciples in spite of all the teaching of the Master. But, like all the other questions which the disciples put to Jesus, it also shows the familiar relation that existed between Master and pupil. The disciples were at least not afraid to ask questions. That is the way to learn. Nor did the Master resent the interruptions. He answered the questions.

V. 6. "*Says Jesus to him, I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No man cometh to the Father except through Me.*" Note that Jesus does not simply repeat what He had said formerly about His suffering and death and resurrection. His answer is rather an explanation of the significance of His Passion. Taking up the thought expressed in the opening words, "Believe in God and believe in Me,"



He enlarges on the relation between Himself and the Father. The only way to the Father and to the many mansions in the Father's house is through Him. He knew that the connection would be clear to His disciples later, when they should have been filled with the Holy Ghost. So now He would merely impress upon them the fact that the only way to the Father's house is through Him. Jesus does not merely *teach* the way and the truth and the life. Nor does He only *exemplify* in His lofty character the way and the truth and the life. He *is*, in His very person, the Way and the Truth and the Life. Not one of many, but the only one. It is not true that man can reach heaven by any one of various roads. Jesus is the only road to heaven. And there is no saving truth but the truth that centers in Him. And outside of Him there is no life, no spiritual life, no eternal life. To leave no room for uncertainty in the matter the statement is emphasized once more by the declaration, "No man cometh to the Father except by Me."

But why can there be no doubt about it that the way through Jesus does lead to the Father's house without fail? It is because of the intimate relation that exists between the Father and the Son, as the Master proceeds to explain.

V. 7 (according to the so-called Received Text). "*If ye had known Me, ye would also have known the Father, and from now on ye know Him and have seen Him.*" This contrary-to-fact conditional sentence would have to be interpreted in this way: Formerly ye have not known Me, if ye had, etc. But in that case we should rather expect an adversative conjunction in the next sentence: But from henceforth, etc. — There is another reading, which has the reality-type of construction: "*If ye have known Me, ye will also know My Father, and from now on ye do know Him and have seen Him.*" This reading emphasizes the fact that to know Jesus means also to know the Father. Whether you accept the first or the second version, the truth expressed in both is this, that the true knowledge of God depends on the knowledge of Jesus. There is no other way to know God. Father and Son are inseparable. John 5, 23; 1 John 2, 23. Jesus and the Father are so inseparable, one, that he who knows Jesus by faith has seen the Father. How, then, can there be any question for the believer in Jesus about his eternal rest in the Father's house? Thus Jesus develops the thought expressed in the words, "Believe in God and believe in Me." But the disciples did not understand.

V. 8. "*Philip says to Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us.*" The question was a childish one; but it was at least a question, and it gave the Master opportunity for more explanation. He does reprove Philip mildly, but He does not grow impatient with him.

V. 9. "*Says Jesus to him, During so long a time (other reading: in so much time) I am with you, and you have not known Me? Philip, he who has seen Me has seen the Father; and how do you say, Show us the Father?*" Living in such close contact with Jesus for three years, seeing His miracles, and hearing His words, Philip should have known Jesus; he should have recognized Him as the Son of God, who is the likeness of the Father and one with the Father. Such, however, is the weakness of faith; it frequently does not see what is clearly before the eyes. But it is a remarkable testimony that he who sees Jesus sees the Father. Cf. 1 Tim. 3, 16. God is revealed in Jesus, and therefore he who rejects Jesus rejects God.

Jesus proceeds to develop this truth. V. 10. "*Do you not believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in Me? The words which I speak to you I do not speak of Myself; but the Father who abides in Me, He Himself doeth the works.*" Jesus presents the case from a number of angles, so that there may be no misunderstanding as to what He means. He is in the Father, and the Father is in Him. So intimately are they united. The words which Jesus speaks are the Father's words, and the works of Jesus are the Father's works. Cf. John 5, 17—43. We do not wonder that the disciples were unable to grasp all this. It is beyond human ken and conception. It is a mystery great without controversy. 1 Tim. 3, 16. But so much is certain, the Father and Son are one, one in essence, though two distinct persons, one in Their words, one in Their works. Later on in His farewell address, Jesus uses similar words of the Holy Ghost. John 14, 26; 15, 13—15. But it is to be observed that Jesus is not speaking of His divine nature as such. He is speaking of Himself as He stood before His disciples in the flesh. The union of the two natures in Jesus is so close that the attributes of one are predicated of the entire person. Cf. Acts 3, 15; 1 Cor. 2, 6.

Jesus now calls upon His disciples to accept His testimony. V. 11. "*Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me. But if not [if you will not believe My words], believe Me because of the works themselves [the very works].*" Faith is the one requisite on the part of man to reach the goal, the mansions in the Father's house. Cf. V. 1. Not any sort of faith, but faith in Jesus who is one with the Father. Cf. v. 6. Therefore this repeated appeal of Jesus to His disciples to believe, to believe in Him. And if nothing else can convince them, let them consider His works. They are incontrovertible proof of His divine person and of His divine mission. Cf. John 20, 31. There can be no question that the disciples did believe at that time, though their faith was as yet very imperfect. It was different with them after they had received that abundant measure of the Spirit's gift which Jesus had promised them. Indeed, it is only through the operation of the Holy Ghost that a person can and does believe. Com-



pare what Jesus told Peter after he had declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matt. 16, 17. See also 1 Cor. 12, 3. Hence it is not surprising that the contemporaries of Jesus, and foremost among them the leaders of the people, would not accept the testimony of His words and works. They resisted the Holy Ghost. Acts 7, 51. And that is also the explanation for the experience we make to-day, when we find so many rejecting Jesus as the Son of God and the only way to God. They have not the Spirit.

Jesus now turns to another phase of the question. Not only is the eternal happiness of the believer assured, he also has no reason to worry while he is on the way to his goal.

V. 12. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in Me, even he will do the works which I do; and he will do greater than these, because I go to My Father.*" A remarkable promise! And how strong the Master makes it! What does He mean? Certainly He is not speaking of the work of salvation. For that only He could accomplish. He treads the winepress alone. Is. 63, 3. In a measure Jesus is, no doubt, referring to the miracles for which He gave the power to many of the believers in the early days of the Church. But that does not cover the whole extent of the promise. What greater works than He did would His followers do? They would evangelize the world. Jesus had taught for three years, and at the end of that time the believers numbered some 500 souls. 1 Cor. 15, 6. His mission had been to provide salvation for the world. It was not His purpose to bring the good news to the peoples of the earth in person. After His resurrection He would withdraw His visible presence and go to the Father. But the believers were to go out into all the world and preach the Gospel unto every creature. Of course, they were to be His emissaries, and He would be with them always. But *they* were to do the work. And as messengers of the Gospel they were to do greater works than Jesus Himself did. The apostles established the Church in every quarter of the world, and the work has been going on ever since. In view of this blessed privilege and glorious opportunity for service during his sojourn on earth the Christian ought to have no time to worry about his troubles, knowing that they will all be solved anyway when he reaches the mansions above. Note that Jesus is speaking generally and not of the apostles alone. And His words are positive: "He that believeth in Me . . . will do," etc. Every true believer is engaged in the great work of evangelization, whether as a preacher or as one who supports the message by his gifts and efforts and prayers. What a noble calling, to be a Christian! And how important for the world! See Matt. 5, 13, 14.

Then Jesus pledges the divine support in whatever way the believer may need it. V. 13. "*And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name,*

*that I will do, in order that the Father be glorified in His Son.*" The believer has much to ask for because he needs much. In fact, we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. 2 Cor. 3, 5. And, speaking generally, the Savior says later in His farewell address, "Without Me ye can do nothing." 15, 5. The promise of help is unlimited and unrestricted. But it must be asked in Jesus' name; for there is no other way to divine favor than through Him. And Jesus Himself will answer the prayers. At another time He says that the Father will give what the believer asks in Jesus' name. 15, 16. It is the same; for Jesus and the Father are one. What the Father does, Jesus does, and *vice versa*. And thus is the Father glorified in the Son. Remember what Jesus later says of the work of the Spirit, and you have the picture complete of the Holy Trinity working in unison for the same end.

To remove every vestige of uncertainty in the matter, Jesus repeats His words with a slight change in phraseology: "*If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.*" V. 14. What, then, is there left to trouble the believer? He has the assurance of divine guidance and help throughout life, and his ultimate goal are the mansions in the Father's house, where he shall find rest eternal. If we would only believe with all our heart!

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The text is marvelously rich, and the possibilities for sermonic treatment are great. The truths may be covered in a single sermon, but almost every verse will furnish a subject for changes in the presentation. We submit a few outlines: A. (Simply following the line of thought as it runs in the text.) Introduction: Picture the condition, both mental and spiritual, of the disciples at the time. It is typical of the condition in which Christians frequently find themselves. There is much that troubles us one way or another. And the opening words of the Master's farewell are applicable generally. "*Let Not Your Heart be Troubled.*" Why? Faith is the panacea for all our troubles. V. 1. How? 1. It assures us of eternal rest in the Father's mansions. And the very purpose of Jesus' suffering and death and resurrection is to prepare that home. V. 2. And Jesus Himself will return to take the believer to that home. V. 3. The disciples had many questions about these things. Likewise there is much uncertainty on these matters in the world to-day. But there is only one way to the Father, namely, Jesus. Hence not any kind of faith will serve the purpose. Only that faith saves which takes into account Jesus. Vv. 1. 4. 5. 6. On the other hand, this way is absolutely sure, because Jesus and the Father are one; one in essence and one in their plans and words and works. That is the testimony of Jesus, and His works bear witness to His words. Vv. 4—11. 2. The fruits of



faith fill our life with the greatest opportunity for blessing while we are on our way to the mansions of the Father. V. 12. And whatever we may need on our journey we have the positive promise of Jesus that He will supply all our wants. Vv. 13. 14. Why, then, should we be troubled? Oh, for an ever-increasing measure of faith!—B. Introduction as in A. *“Let Not Your Heart be Troubled.”* 1. Have your goal constantly before your eyes. a) What it is. Vv. 1. 2. b) Who has prepared it. Vv. 2. 3. c) How it is obtained. Vv. 1. 4. 5. 6. d) Why there can be no doubt about it. Vv. 4—11. 2. Concentrate on your great commission. a) What it is and what Jesus says about it. V. 12. b) What promise He gives. Vv. 13. 14. Indeed, there is neither cause nor time to be disturbed. Only have faith.—C. Introduction: The striking contrast between the last words of Jesus to His foes and His parting words to His friends. The very opening words of His farewell address sound the key-note of what He has to tell them. *The Comfort of Faith.* 1. The eternal home is prepared. Where? By whom? How sure is this? 2. This life is blessedly occupied. The Christian’s great work. The Savior’s wonderful promise. Would that all men had faith, the true faith!—D. Introduction: Many farewell addresses recorded in the Scriptures. But no man could say what Jesus says. To take one of His words: *“In My Father’s House Are Many Mansions.”* 1. Why there can be no doubt about it. Jesus says it. He is one with the Father. He Himself has prepared the mansions. He Himself conducts to them. 2. Which is the way to these mansions? Faith in Jesus. That only, but that surely. 3. What blessedness there is in traveling this road. The works that the believers do. The promise which they have.—E. Introduction: At the beginning of His public ministry Jesus had announced His message. John 3, 1—15. At the close He confirms it in the very face of death: *“I Am the Way and the Truth and the Life; No Man Cometh to the Father but by Me.”* 1. What this means; 2. why it is true.—F. Introduction: Throughout His life Jesus testified that He is the Son of God. And He maintained that testimony to His dying hour. One such instance: *“I Am in the Father, and the Father Is in Me.”* 1. How Jesus varies the expressions to impress that fact; 2. how important it is for us to accept that fact.—G. Introduction: It is one thing to acknowledge that there is a God. It is quite another to know the true God. *How Can I Know God?* 1. Only through His Son Jesus; 2. but positively through Him.—H. Introduction: Our commission to proclaim the Gospel should not be an irksome duty to us; we ought to regard it as a blessed privilege. To fill our hearts with enthusiasm for our work, let us consider what Jesus says about it. *“And Greater Works than These Shall He Do.”* 1. The meaning of these words; 2. the promise attached to them.

## Outlines on the Standard Gospel-Lessons.

### Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

LUKE 17, 11—19 (17).

Retell the story, told only by Luke, in all its sterling simplicity and directness. (It is part of the preacher's duty to tell the *magnalia Christi* in the assembly.) Stress especially the time, the faith implied in v. 14, "as they went," the "when he saw," v. 15, and "this stranger," v. 18 (*ἀλλογενής* only here in New Testament; usually *ξένος*).

Why did Luke record this incident from Jesus' ministry? What is its teaching and admonition? It is a solemn reminder of an easily forgotten duty. Ps. 103, 2.

*FORGET NOT, O MY SOUL, THY SAVIOR'S BLESSINGS!*

1. *The nine who forgot.*    2. *The one who remembered.*

#### 1.

It was part of the Messiah's work to cleanse lepers. Matt. 11, 5; Ex. 15, 26b; Ps. 103, 3b ("*all thy diseases*"); Lev. 13, 14 (the priestly ritual for lepers).

a. Ten victims of this loathsome disease met mercy personified in the person of the Lord, who was on His way to Jerusalem for the last Passover. They had heard of the mighty works wrought by this Lord, Luke 17, 6. As required by the Law, they "stood afar off," lifted up their voices, crying aloud (note the fine parallel, v. 15, "with a loud voice"): "Jesus, Master (*ἐπιστάτα*, one who stands over, superintendent, only in Luke, 6 times: 5, 5; 8, 24, 45; 9, 33, 45; 17, 13) have mercy on us." The old, old scene since sin brought death and all its woes: Misery meeting Mercy and craving cure.

b. In answer to their cry the compassionate Lord, ever willing to hear the cry of faith, testing their sincerity in calling Him "Master," with a loud voice replies, "Go, show," etc. Lev. 14: Such was the Law, and He who was made under the Law, Gal. 4, 4, lived in perfect obedience to it, Matt. 5, 17; 17, 5; John 8, 46; 1 Pet. 2, 21—23. Cf. also Matt. 8, 4 with its significant addition, "for a testimony unto them," namely, of His perfect compliance with the Law. Mark 1, 44; Luke 5, 14.

c. Believing, the afflicted company obeys the Master's command, takes Him at His word. And now what remarkable restraint in the evangelist's language! We involuntarily exclaim: Behold! Marvel! Look and be astounded! Luke simply: "And it came to pass [so our account began, v. 11], that as they went, they were cleansed" (of their dire disease). Ah, there's a reason for this restraint, this reserve, for the story has a sad sequel. Nine of those ten went, but they went not to return. They had cried with a loud voice for relief,



but, having received their request, their voice became silent. They had believed, received the Master's word with joy, but alas! only "for a while." Luke 8, 13. Did "the time of temptation" come, when they showed themselves to the priests (individually, separately, if Edersheim is correct)? Remember we are far along in the ministry of the Lord. He is on His last journey to Jerusalem, when the enmity of the priestly class has reached its worst stage. Whatever the reason, nine of the ten did not return to the Lord for an acknowledgment of His merciful kindness to them.

*Application.*—"Where are the nine?" Yes, there's a pathos about these words. Where is the great majority of those who have received blessings from their Savior, blessings both earthly and heavenly? Forgetful, oblivious of blessings received from their gracious Lord, "where are the nine?" Solemnly, sadly they warn us, though absent and silent: "Forget not thy Savior's blessings, O my soul!"

## 2.

The nine, the great majority of those who had been blessed by Jesus, forgot. But if the sequel of the story told us only of the nine, it would afford us but negative instruction. However, as in all instances, the Bible gives us very positive instruction, showing us from the example of the "one" what the nine ought to have done.

a. The Greek text begins emphatically: "*One* of them, however (*ὁ δέ*), turned back." Whither? To Jesus, self-evidently. Is it so self-evident? Then why did not the nine turn back? *When* did the one cleansed leper turn back? *NB.*: "When he saw that he was healed." Did he not proceed to the priest first? If he did, it would certainly seem almost ridiculous for Luke to add these words, "when he saw that he was healed," v. 15. — Furthermore, a Samaritan proceeding to a Jewish priest, in view of John 4, 9? We are set to thinking. Or, did he perhaps repair to a Samaritan priest? The Samaritans accepted the books of Moses and so Lev. 13, 14 was known to them. Jesus, in view of John 4, 22, of course, meant the Jewish priests, v. 14. Correct. What follows? This, that the Samaritan's faith was more severely tried than that of the nine who were Jews. (Cp. the severe trial of the Syrophenician woman's faith. Matt. 15, 21—28.) He, though a Samaritan, boldly went on his way with the Jewish lepers to show himself to a Jewish priest. Why? Because the Lord, 17, 6, the Master, v. 13, told him to do so. Cp. the woman of Samaria's remark to Jesus concerning Messiah, John 4, 25. Great faith indeed! But the primary point of our narrative is to show the remarkable fruit faith produces.

b. What was the fruit of his faith? He turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God (so Greek), etc., vv. 15, 16. Not only had he cried with a loud voice, "Have mercy upon me"; but his prayer hav-

ing been heard, he *at once, without hesitation*, turned back. What else? He fell on his face at the feet of Him, *giving Him thanks*. (Note the identification of God with Jesus here.) He recognized Jesus' true nature and returned to acknowledge his faith. But above all he *gave Him thanks*. At Jesus' feet, giving glory and thanks to Him, to God! Where were the nine? Wherever they were, they had not returned to give glory to God, v. 18. Note how Jesus here identifies Himself with God. It was again a case of "To him that hath shall be given," etc. Luke 8, 18.

c. There was added to him the comforting assurance: thy faith hath saved thee, hath made thee whole, v. 19. He henceforth belonged to Jesus, his Lord, his Master. To the knowledge that Jesus could heal him was added the knowledge that Jesus was the Son of the living God, the Savior, who could heal not only the body, but also the soul.

*Conclusion.*—Such is the lesson of the believing Samaritan, the stranger. Jesus "found" more than one might expect from him and less from the Jews. Let us remember the mercy of our Savior and not forget His benefits and blessings. (Hymn 204, 4.)

Los Angeles, Cal.

O. W. WISMAR.

### Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

MATT. 24—34 (33).

How about your future? This is the problem of the student in selecting proper courses of study. This is your problem. We are not drifting like dead fish down-stream. You are living to a certain end. What is the target at which you are aiming? How are you aiming to hit the mark?

#### PLANNING YOUR FUTURE.

1. *What is the future you are planning?*
2. *What are your plans for that future?*

##### 1.

A. False futures, disastrous goals towards which some are running, questionable occupations: gamblers, adulterous "movie stars," new Messiahs. Others follow the lure of deceitful riches, of the "almighty" dollar, of mammon; others coddle the vainglorious ambition to spread their name on the front pages of the press. To do this they would fly to the North Pole, across oceans, or engage in senseless "Marathons." Like Phaethon they would drive the chariot of the sun for a day. Self ("What shall I eat," etc.) is the only towering colossus which some can see in the past, present, and future. Selfishness and greed is the magic skin of the fable that gradually presses the breath and life out of its wearer. "After all these things do the Gentiles seek."



B. The noble future, the "morrow" worthy of a Christian.

a. In the family, the corner-stone of the State and of the Church. Are you striving to be such a member of your family as God wants you to be, so that there will be no after-regrets, but joy even in your old age as to your conduct as son, daughter, father, mother, spouse?

b. In the State. Is your aim to be a good and faithful neighbor, a loyal, law-abiding citizen?

c. In your occupation, school, shop, etc. Are you employing conscientiously the talents and gifts with which God has endowed you to His glory, in the service of your fellow-men?

d. In the Church. What is your to-morrow in this divine institution? Are you idling, merely looking on, riding on the transportation of others? Let your aim be high! Never be satisfied with secondary achievements in the vineyard of the Lord.

e. When looking towards the morrow, we must not forget the day that lies beyond the dark valley. Are you giving that glorious morning due thought? Will you then shine as a star of minor or as one of greater brilliancy? Will you shine at all?

Here are some thoughts for the morrow that ought to engage our minds.

## 2.

A. The important thing, however, is not merely to have visions of a glorious future, but to follow correct plans to realize and achieve them. In order to avoid confusion that would defeat our purposes, we must do things in their proper order. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear"; first the root, then the flower; first the foundation, later the roof. First things first!

B. What is the "first thing" that we need absolutely to achieve the worthy aims that we have set before us?

a. The first thing that most people foolishly desire is mammon, money. "Money will buy anything!" Others would give first consideration to a good education; or to determination, will-power ("Where there is a will there is a way"); or, as some eugenics do, to "heredity," etc.

b. Our blessed Lord and Master lays down our life's direction in the text when He says: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God . . . added unto you." Membership in the kingdom of God and a life of the righteousness that God demands and supplies, is the condition and guarantee of our Lord for the abundant life. "Success in life absolutely depends upon the quality of the soul." A great and beautiful painting or a cathedral must first be conceived in the heart and mind of the artist. The created universe with its masterful design and its matchless beauty reflects the heart of God. Your outward conduct, work, activity, life in home, at work, as a citizen, in the Church, as a heaven-bound pilgrim is the outward manifestation of the thoughts

and ideas that move your inward soul. Not pagan religions with their false morality, but only the kingdom of God, the Church of Jesus Christ, can supply the proper religion and righteousness that guarantees the true life and a blessed eternity. (Pieper, *Dogmatik*, I, pp. 8. 15. 16. 36 ff. On the *nexus indivulsus* between justification and sanctification, Vol. III, p. 6 ff.) Ps. 37, 25; 1 Kings 3, 5 ff.; 1 Tim. 4, 8; 6, 6—14.

Have you proper visions of the future? Are you planning your life correctly? The blessed Redeemer pleads with you, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and promises, "And all these things shall be added unto you."

Cleveland Heights, O.

H. W. BARTELS.

### Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

LUKE 7, 11—17.

"Weep for yourselves." Luke 23, 28. Why? Their tears misdirected. The daughters of Jerusalem bewailed Jesus as a mistreated man, did not see their own wretchedness. Such tears are not wiped away. — "Weep not," etc., Rev. 5, 5, is the comfort addressed to all believers. "Weep not," the Savior says to the widow in our text. So there are tears which are wiped away.

#### TEARS WIPED AWAY FROM OUR EYES.

1. *Tears of true repentance;* 2. *Tears of Christian sorrow.*

##### 1.

"Behold, there was a dead man carried out." What a startling sermon! Why? Because death is natural? So the unbelievers think. They look at funerals with indifference. Rather common. Mrs. Eddy asserts death is a mortal illusion. Natural man has not the right conception of death and its horrors.

"Death entered into the world." Rom. 5, 12. The reason is stated Gen. 2, 17. And now death is general. Rom. 5, 12; 6, 23; Ezek. 18, 20. Death is a curse, a punishment for sin, a sign of God's anger. See Ps. 90, 7. 8. Death is one punishment for sin. Another more terrible one follows after death: Judgment and eternal damnation of all unbelievers. Heb. 9, 27; John 5, 28; Dan. 12, 2; Matt. 25, 41. On that terrible day of Judgment the godless would be only too ready to die again. Rev. 6, 15—17; 9, 6. Every corpse, every funeral, every graveyard, preaches a sermon that should shock the heart of the impenitent to the quick.

The widow in our text must have been a true believer. The Savior treated her as such. His address, "Weep not," would have meant no more to her than words of sympathy spoken by her friends if she had not embraced Jesus as her Savior. And although she was



a believer, she wept. In the death of her son she was reminded of the terrible curse of sin. A very personal matter to her. She, too, was a sinner and subject to death. By sins of omission and commission she had also failed in her duties as a mother to her son. She believed with all her heart that she would have to die in her sins and go to eternal damnation if she could not repose her soul in Jesus. She was a penitent sinner. Hence, He says, "Weep not." To the impenitent He must say, "Weep for yourselves," but to the believers He can but say, "Weep not."

God grant us true repentance when death enters our homes! May His Spirit in such days teach us to see the error of our ways and our end! Ps. 90, 12. Let us in such sad hours search our hearts and examine ourselves. Let us bear in mind that we have often grieved the dear one we are burying. The Lord Jesus speaks to you most solemnly and very personally in such days. Do not put off the day of your repentance. You may die young like the man in the text. Above all, however, flee to the arms of Jesus, your only Refuge. He is only too ready to receive the penitent sinner. Matt. 11, 28.

## 2.

The Christian sheds tears over the death of his beloved ones. Not sinful in itself. Abraham wept for Sarah. Jesus wept at Lazarus's tomb. Cp. 2 Sam. 1, 24; Luke 6, 21, 25; John 11, 31. Christians shed tears because they love the one who has fallen asleep. The widow in the text. Or they shed tears of Christian sympathy. V. 12, "Much people," etc.

But Christian grief in hours of bereavement is different from that of the children of this world. The latter wail and, we may say, in many instances howl, because they have no hope. Tears of despair. They accuse God of injustice because, in His wisdom, He has taken away their dear one. What hideous and blasphemous words they often utter in their frenzy and uncontrollable grief! We pity these poor blind people, but their bed is of their own making.

The Christian, however, is assured of God's love in all his ways, even the darkest. Jesus came to Nain and came just at the right moment, because He was aware that one of His dear children needed Him sorely. V. 13 applies also to-day. Again the Christian is aware that his relatives and friends whom the Lord removes from this earth belong to God, because He has created, redeemed, and sanctified them; Jesus gave the son back to his mother, because he belonged to Him. V. 15. Hence, the Christian's sorrow does not proceed from a spirit of resentment. He does not murmur against God.

Tears of true Christian sorrow the Savior is ready to wipe away. He assures the bereaved that He has removed the sting of death, 1 Cor. 15, 55—57; John 8, 51; that the soul of a Christian in the hour of death wings its flight to heaven, Luke 23, 43; that his bliss is

glorious beyond description, Rev. 7, 15 ff.; Phil. 1, 21; Rev. 14, 13; that the bodies of the believers shall rise unto eternal life, just as the young man was brought back to life, Job 19, 25, 26; 1 Thess. 4, 13, 14.

Thus you have learned which tears Jesus is ready to wipe away. Follow His instructions. Tears of true repentance need never be repented of. The solemn hour when death enters our homes will be profitably employed if we then learn to say: "God be merciful to me, a sinner." And how willing Jesus is to show us mercy! Besides, for whatever grief may tear our hearts asunder He has a healing balm.

B.

### Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

LUKE 14, 1—11.

Our daily life offers many opportunities to bear testimony to the truth: meeting a chance acquaintance on the street; in the street-car; in the Pullman smoking-room; speaking with a fellow-worker in the shop, at the office; with a friend on the golf-links; or when we are called upon to speak at some public or semipublic affair; etc. — Men and women all about us have their problems, their difficulties, their troubles, their views regarding God, salvation, the hereafter, or some doctrine that happens to be before the public mind. We who have been soundly instructed in the Word of God may be able to set an erring brother on the right path, help him bear his burden in patience, or show him the way to heaven and happiness.

The Savior grasped such opportunities. Witness His conversation with the woman of Samaria, the Emmaus disciples, Zacchaeus, Mary and Martha of Bethany, and others. Note Prov. 25, 11 and 1 Pet. 3, 15.

Our text presents another example. Let us consider:

#### *OUR LORD AS A TEACHER AT A PHARISEE'S TABLE.*

He gives instruction

1. *In true mercy;*
2. *In true humility.*

#### 1.

The occasion: v. 1. The Lord is away from Jerusalem in Galilee, the domain of Herod Antipas. The Pharisee was a man of prominence, perhaps for learning and piety. The Lord was invited to attend dinner at his home. Whether He was the guest of honor is not said. It is not improbable, owing to the Lord's fame, even though the obvious intention was to observe Him closely; "they were watching Him." He was among His enemies. Still He found occasion to do them good. He is the Savior of all men. He came to seek and save sinners. By nature we are all His enemies.

The trap. Vv. 2 ff. The man sick with dropsy had been brought in to ensnare the Lord. If He healed him on the Sabbath, they would



denounce Him as a Sabbath-breaker; if He did not, they would decry Him as unmerciful. (Luther, XIII, 894.) But this did not hinder the compassion of the Lord who read their thoughts. Cf. the similar occasion, Matt. 12. He had not refused their treacherous invitation; why should He withhold an act of mercy? He would not let the opportunity to testify to the truth pass, even if His enemies hoped to harm Him therefor.

"They held their peace." They knew He was right, but refused to admit that they were wrong. — In regard to the Savior's question in v. 5 compare Luther, XIII, 895 f.

"They could not answer." His argument had floored them. They could have answered the first question and would not; now they would have, but they could not.

The Lord by His act of mercy settled all questions about Sabbath rest. The rest was intended for the contemplation of God's Word and works. Certain labor must needs be performed, not as an exception, but because it is not out of harmony with God's will. Hence Luther correctly places the emphasis on "the Word and the preaching of the Gospel." Both were present here: the Living Word and the merciful deed. Thus the humble Savior put to shame the arrogant and supercilious lawyers, who were punctilious about the letter of the Law, but had never learned its merciful spirit.

Let us not be silent in the face of false teaching regarding the Sabbath Law.

Let us be diligent in doing acts of mercy, as the most excellent fruits of true faith in Jesus Christ.

## 2.

Vv. 7—11. Critics have called the Lord impolite for administering this lesson to His fellow-guests. Let us remember that there is much more impoliteness and lack of love couched in the expression of polite forms than in many a departure from these forms. Jesus came to bear witness to the truth, and the saving truth confers a greater favor than the observance of a mere form.

The Lord had observed the inordinate vanity of some of the guests. His parable is a development of Prov. 25, 6, 7.

It is an important lesson. V. 11. Luther: "No one can hate the humble, and no man can endure the proud." The Bible is replete with examples of how the Lord carried out this principle, both with individuals and with nations. (Saul, David, Ahab, the Jews and Jerusalem, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Naaman, Uzziah, Hezekiah, Haman, Belshazzar, etc.) Compare also Luther, XIII, 2398 ff. 2401. Ps. 73, 6; Prov. 11, 2; 16, 18; 29, 23; Luke 1, 52; Job 9, 13; 24, 24; 26, 12; etc.

May God preserve us from all pride, especially also the false spiritual pride that bases salvation on man's works and will not accept Jesus Christ as the only Savior from sin and damnation! W. G. P.

**Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.**

MATT. 22, 34—46 (MARK 12, 34).

According to the clear teaching of God's Word there are but two classes of men, the converted and the unconverted. There is no intermediate state; no middle class in the spiritual realm. Either a person is a believer, and then he is a member of Christ's kingdom, or he is an unbeliever, and then he is still in the kingdom of Satan. John 3, 18; Luke 11, 23; Mark 16, 16. This Scriptural truth must be held against all enthusiasts, who teach, on the one hand, that, while a person may believe in Jesus Christ, he yet may be in a condition where he is not a real Christian; and on the other, that a person may be a near-Christian by doing the works of the Law, even though he may as yet not truly believe in Christ Jesus. This error destroys a contrite sinner's consolation, who, being terrified by the accusations of the Law and his conscience, is driven to despair. Again, it leads a sinner to believe that he can, at least partly, save himself by his good works, and thus it casts him into eternal perdition. No, we must hold to God's Word and firmly believe that every true believer is saved, while every one that believeth not is damned. There are only two classes of men, believers and unbelievers. However, if that is true, how could Jesus say to the scribe in the text: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God"? Do not these words teach that there is an intermediate state? Since these words have been misinterpreted so frequently, let us now consider them. Let me set forth:

*THE WORDS OF JESUS: "THOU ART NOT FAR FROM  
THE KINGDOM OF GOD."*

They are words

1. *Of kindly commendation,*
2. *Of solemn exhortation,*
3. *Of earnest warning.*

1.

The scribe, or lawyer, manifestly was not a believing Christian. This Jesus declares expressly; he was not yet *in* the kingdom of God. (Enlarge!) This is apparent also from the fact that he was "one of them," namely, one of the Pharisees, who as a class rejected Christ and trusted in their works for salvation. Matt. 15, 1—14; 3, 7; 9, 11; 12, 14; 19, 3; 22, 34. Again, the scribe asked Jesus the question "*tempting Him.*" Hence it is evident that he was not a believing Christian; he did not believe in Jesus as the promised Savior of the world and did not trust in Him for salvation. Luke 22, 67; John 8, 46; 6, 40. 47. He was outside the kingdom of God — lost. He was far from the kingdom of God.

Yet Jesus, the good Shepherd, seeking in love to save this erring sheep, found much to commend in him. First, he accepted the Holy



Scriptures as God's Word, Mark 12, 32; he adhered to the Word of God as the only norm of faith. Again, he studied the Scriptures diligently, so that he was well informed. When Jesus answered his question, Mark 12, 29—31; Matt. 22, 37—40, he at once knew that the reply was correct. Mark 12, 32. Third, he acknowledged the true God of Israel and the true worship of that God. Mark 12, 32. 33. Fourth, he did not reject the teaching of Jesus, but answered discreetly, *σοφιστικῶς*, intelligently, that is, in accordance with God's Word, v. 34. Thus the scribe diligently used the Word of God, accepting its truths, though, as a blinded Pharisee, he had not yet found Jesus. John 5, 38; Acts 10, 43. This diligent use of the means of grace Jesus commended and said this Pharisee was not far from the kingdom of God because he was employing the divinely instituted means by which a sinner is born again and brought into God's kingdom through faith in Christ. Rom. 10, 17; 1 Pet. 1, 23—25; Jas. 1, 18—21.

This kindly commendation of Jesus teaches us a most valuable lesson, namely, that we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we use the means of grace, the Word of God and the Sacraments. Luke 11, 28; John 5, 24; 6, 63; 12, 48; Acts 13, 26. 46; 1 Cor. 1, 18; Acts 2, 38; 1 Cor. 11, 24—29. — However these words of Jesus are also

## 2.

*Words of solemn exhortation.* The scribe, being a Jew and, in addition, one perverted by the Pharisaic leaven, had failed to grasp the kernel of the Old Testament Scriptures, namely, the comforting promises concerning the Messiah. Deut. 18, 15 — John 6, 14; Ps. 110, 1—4 — Heb. 5, 6; 7, 17; Ps. 24, 7—10 — John 1, 49. Hence his religious views were degraded; his religion was false, and he was outside the kingdom of God. John 21, 25—27; Mark 1, 15; John 12, 36; 16, 9; 8, 21—24. However, he did accept the Scriptures, which testify of Christ, John 5, 45—46, and he was even now listening to Him whom the Scriptures had prophesied. Hence the words of Jesus: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God," were a solemn exhortation to believe what the Scriptures say of Christ and to accept with a believing heart His own testimony concerning Himself. Matt. 22, 41—45; Mark 12, 35—37. (Show how the whole argumentation in these passages was designed to prove that Jesus is the Christ.) Thus, by the words of the text Jesus meant to tell the scribe: You accept the Scriptures, you admit that what I have spoken is the truth; therefore believe that I am the Christ and thus become a member of God's kingdom.

The lesson is important also for us. Unless we believe in Christ as our only Savior, we shall be damned, even if we know the whole Bible by heart and accept its ethical and historical facts as true. Gal. 3, 26; Eph. 2, 8; 2 Cor. 13, 5. Unless we believe in Christ, we are in darkness and do not understand the Scriptures, and our whole

study of the Bible will profit us nothing. Is. 44, 18; Luke 2, 50; Acts 8, 30; John 1, 4—5; 8, 12; 12, 35—46 (a warning against Modernism). Let us accept Jesus' solemn exhortation and believe in Him. — However, Jesus' words are finally a most

## 3.

*Earnest warning.* The scribe with the whole Jewish nation had received most wonderful blessings. He knew the true God, who had manifested Himself through miracles for almost two thousand years of Israel's history (Abraham to Jesus). He had the precious Word of God, which is not only the record of God's salvation, but also the means of grace. Rom. 10, 17. He heard Jesus, the divine Prophet, and had seen His miracles. Luke 24, 19; John 6, 14; Matt. 13, 17; John 12, 49; Matt. 4, 23—25; John 10, 24—26. How near had God brought His kingdom to him! Yet how far was he from the kingdom of God! Hence Jesus' words were words of earnest warning not to despise His Word nor to let the time of grace pass by. Mark 12, 34b; Matt. 22, 46.

Oh, let us, too, heed this warning! If we do not believe in Christ, how great shall be our damnation! For God has given us His Word in its truth and purity these many years. If we have known the truth and believed in Christ, but fallen away from Christ and despised the truth, our eternal torment will be unspeakable. Luke 12, 47; Heb. 6, 4—6. Let us, then, beware of the dangers that beset us in this ungodly age — unbelief, ingratitude, indifferentism, obduration, etc. 1 Cor. 10, 1—5. Let us beware also of false prophets who teach the old Pharisaic error of salvation by good works, for their number is great in our age. Let us, finally, beware of studying the Holy Scriptures without seeking to find Christ in them. May God Himself, through His Holy Spirit, grant us grace to do His will! J. T. M.

## Abraham, der Vater der Gläubigen, in Charakterbildern.

### 1 Mos. 23.

Offenb. 6, 7. 8. Der Tod, der König der Schrecken, reitet Tag für Tag durch die Menschheit und läßt uns nicht vergessen: Röm. 5, 12. 13. Ja, die schillernde Sünde, der alle natürlichen Menschen mit solcher Lust und Eifer dienen, ist die Mutter alles Jammers auf Erden, der dem Tod in tausendfacher Gestalt vorangeht. Die Sünde hat die Erde zu einem großen Jammerthal gemacht, zu einem großen Armen-, Kranken-, Wein-, Klage- und Totenhaus. Könnten wir die Totenklage hören, die jetzt, in der Stunde unsers Gottesdienstes, auf dem Erdenrund schauerlich erklingt, wir würden uns entsetzen und die Sünde hassen, die auch uns noch immerdar anklebt. Auch in Christenfamilien bricht das „faule Pferd“ (Offenb. 6, 8) ein und verursacht großes Herzeleid. Blickt in Abrahams Haus und seht:



## Abraham, den tieftrauernden Witwer.

1. Er beweint das Abscheiden seiner langjährigen Lebensgefährtin.
2. Er kauft im Lande der Verheißung einen Erbegräbnisplatz.

## 1.

B. 1. 2a. Die Trennung. Sara war dem Abraham trotz all ihrer Schwächen eine rechte Ehefrau nach Gottes Herzen, 1 Petr. 3, 6. Ihr Leben war eine stete Pilgerfahrt, war voll Unruhe, aber auch voller Erfahrungen der reichen Güte Gottes. Herausgerissen aus dem Heidentum, Teilhaberin aller Verheißungen, Stammutter des Heilandes der Welt, Mutter aller Gläubigen, Vorbild aller christlichen Frauen. Im hohen Alter noch Kindermutter. Noch siebenunddreißig Jahre durfte sie sich ihres Sohnes freuen und an seiner Erziehung zum Gotteskind treulich mitwirken. Nun ist ihr Lauf, ein reiches Frauenleben, vollendet, ihre Arbeit getan; Gott ruft sie heim zur Ruhe seines Volkes; sie ist nun selig. — Ein wunderschönes Bild des Lebens christlicher Ehefrauen. Welche Gnade Gottes, eines christlichen Mannes Gehilfin sein zu dürfen, teilzuhaben an allen Gnaden Gottes, Kindern das Leben zu schenken, sie aufzuziehen in der Zucht und Ermahnung zum Herrn, sich ihrer freuen zu dürfen, wenn sie wohl geraten, und nach des Tages Last und Hitze heimzugehen und zu erfahren: Offenb. 14, 13. 14! Wie so gar verschieden von dem verlornen Leben so vieler Frauen unserer Tage, die ihr Leben führen los von Gott, der Lust und Eitelkeit lebend!

B. 2b. Tiefe Trauer. Abraham kam in das Sterbegemach. Seine so liebe, treue Gemahlin, die ihm lebenslang alle Liebe und Ehre erwiesen hatte, war nun von ihm gegangen. Er fühlte ihr Scheiden aufs schmerzlichste. Er legte sich der Leiche gegenüber auf die Erde und ließ seinem Schmerz und seinen Tränen lange Zeit freien Lauf. Das tut seinem Glaubensheldenmut keinen Eintrag. Der Tod ist etwas Gewalttames, ein Zerreißen innigster Bande, etwas Unnatürliches, etwas, wofür die Menschen nicht von Gott geschaffen waren. Luther: „Es ist ihm ohne Zweifel vor seinen Augen und seinem Herzen geschwebt ihre Tugend, die Frömmigkeit, die freundliche Gemeinschaft ihres ganzen Lebens, ihre lieblichen Gebärden und Sitten, so sie an sich gehabt hatte; ihre sanftmütige Art, Zucht, Ehre und herzliche Liebe gegen ihren Mann.“ Kein Wunder, daß er beim Gedenken daran tieftraurig war trotz aller seligen Hoffnung. — Ja, wir Christen dürfen weinen und trauern am Sarge unserer Lieben. Ist es doch ein Zeichen, wie lieb und wert sie uns gewesen sind. Auch die zeitweilige Trennung ist uns schwer. Schrecklich ist es, wenn die Hinterbliebenen am Totenbett frei aufatmen, daß sie endlich eine schwere Last los sind. Aber Christen dürfen nicht trauern wie die Heiden, nicht heulen, schreien, sich die Haare raufen am Sarg und Grab, 1 Thess. 4, 13. Vergessen wir auch nicht, daß stille Trauer oft viel tiefer sitzt als wilde Schmerzensausbrüche.

## 2.

B. 3—9. Der Kaufhandel. Abraham, der Erbe des ganzen Landes, war doch ein Fremdling im Lande, ohne einen Fuß breit Eigentum. Doch er glaubt der Verheißung, daß sein Same das Land besitzen werde. So sollte Sara, so wollten er und die kommenden Erzbäter im Lande der Verheißung ruhen, und zwar in einer Begräbnisstätte, die sein unantastbares Eigentum war. Er wohnte jetzt wieder bei Hebron und suchte von einem passenden Platz, der Höhle Machpelah. Er macht sich auf, diese zu erhandeln. Nach orientalischer Weise wird die Verhandlung auf überaus höfliche, entgegenkommende, feierliche Weise eingeleitet und geführt. Um einen Begräbnisplatz im Lande seiner Nachbarn, der Hethiter, bittet er für seinen Toten, Luk. 20, 38. Alle Begräbnisplätze werden ihm frei angeboten. Doch er will auch im Tode von den Heiden geschieden sein und keine Dankespflicht gegen die haben, die später von seinen Nachkommen ausgerottet werden sollen. Abraham läßt seinen Wunsch laut werden und bittet höflich um Fürsprache bei Ephron. Kein Geschenk, sondern ehrlichen Kauf wünscht er. — Schwer und doch eine süße Liebeserweisung ist es, wenn Christen ausgehen, ein Schlafkammerlein für den Leichnam ihrer Lieben zu bestellen. — Aber auch keine Verpflichtung gegen die, die draußen sind, weder im Leben noch im Tode. Es ziemt sich nicht, bei der Welt betteln zu gehen für Land und Kirchbau, zur Bestreitung der Kosten des Gemeindefausthalts. Dies schwächt das Zeugnis gegen sie ab, ja schließt den Mund; und wenn nicht, so macht es die Christen verächtlich in den Augen der Weltkinder, da die wohl ihr Geld schätzen, aber die Geber strafen und beurteilen. Bittere, aber sehr gerechte Urteile sind von Logengliedern gefällt worden, wenn man sie bei Gründung von Gemeinden um Hilfe angegangen hat.

B. 10—18. Der Kauf. Feierlich bietet Ephron den Platz als Geschenk an, obwohl es nicht ernstlich gemeint war. Hatte er doch den Wert schon berechnet auf etwa \$200. Abraham lehnt höflich, aber entschieden ab. Er bezahlt in ungeprägten Silberstücken, „die im Kaufgang und gäbe waren“, wiegt genau vor Zeugen dar, so daß keine üble Nachrede entstehen konnte. Auch eine genaue gesetzliche Kaufurkunde wird vor Zeugen ausgefertigt (deed), damit später kein Streit über die Grenzen entstehen kann. — Christen lassen im Kauf und Verkauf alles ehrlich und ordentlich zugehen und sind selbst peinlich ehrlich. (Lied 281, 5.) 1 Petr. 4, 15. Ein furchtbares Ürgernis, wenn Gemeindegliedern mit Recht Betrug nachgesagt werden kann, Röm. 2, 23. 24. Christen gehen aber auch nicht leichtsinnig mit dem Thron um, so daß sie betrogen werden können; sie können all ihr Geld nötig gebrauchen zum Bau des Reiches Gottes. Es gibt viele Schwindler und Betrüger, die leichtgläubigen Christen ihr Eigentum abschwindeln wollen. Christen sollen deshalb sehr vorsichtig sein und auch auf gesetzlichen, genauen Urkunden bestehen. Matth. 18, 16 gelte auch in wichtigen irdischen Dingen.



**B. 19. 20. Das Begräbniß.** Mit sehr wenigen Worten wird dies beschrieben. Es war einfach und würdig nach der Sitte der Zeit. Wir hören nicht, daß Abraham einen kostbaren Sarg und viele Blumenstücke angeschafft hätte, um mit großem Pomp seinen Toten zu beerdigen. Der Pomp bei Begräbnissen bringt keinem die Seligkeit und mindert nicht die Höllequal, macht auch nicht gut, was vielleicht an Liebeserweisen während der Lebenszeit des Verschiedenen versäumt worden ist, und hilft niemand. — Indem Abraham ins Grab bettet, spricht er die Hoffnung der Auferstehung aus. Hebr. 11, 19. — Christen verurtheilen die Leichenverbrennung, die auch in unserm Lande ein Ausdruck des Unglaubens ist. Ausgesprochene Atheisten fordern Verbrennung der Leichen. Wir begraben unsere Toten, weil wir wissen, daß derselbe Leib, der dahingefallen ist, wieder auferstehen wird. Unsere Begräbnisplätze nennen wir so schön Kirchhof, Friedhof und am aller schönsten Gottesacker, 1 Kor. 15, 37. 43. 44. 53—56. — Es ist nicht fein, daß bei Begräbnissen für Sarg und Blumen so viel Geld vergeudet wird. Es gibt eine bessere Weise, ein bleibendes Gedächtnis zu stiften: Mindekrantz, Gedächtniskrantz! — Es ist schön, wenn eine Gemeinde einen eigenen Gottesacker hat, wenn er der Christen Hoffnung gemäß gehalten und nicht, wie so oft, eine Wildnis wird. Weltmenschen halten ihre Begräbnisplätze wie schöne Gärten. Christen sollten sich und ihrem Glauben keine Schande machen. — Fein ist's, wenn Christen, die in diesem Leben innig verbunden waren und in Ewigkeit selige Gemeinschaft miteinander halten werden, beisammen auf dem Gottesacker liegen. Solche aber, die im Unglauben dahingefahren sind oder immer „draußen“ waren, sollten weder für Geld noch gute Worte auf unsere Gottesäcker kommen noch von unsern Pastoren begraben werden. Wir sollen bei Gottes Namen nicht lügen und trügen, weder durch eine „Lügenpredigt“ (Leichenpredigt) noch durch unser Formular am Grabe. — So folgen wir denn unserm Vater Abraham auch in diesem Stück und singen betend: Lied 281, 7. 8; 271, 3.

N. Piehler.

### 1 Mos. 24, 1—9.

Der Priester Eli befolgte eine Erziehungsmethode, die jetzt von sehr vielen als allein richtig anerkannt und praktiziert wird. Viele Pädagogen haben diese in unserer wissenschaftlichen Zeit kopiert. Sie gilt als höchst modern. Eli ließ seine Kinder sich selbst erziehen und ihren Charakter bilden. Es wurde aber auch danach! Er sah, höchst modern, nicht einmal „sauer“, wenn seine Söhne sich schändlich hielten. Er hielt es nicht für seine Pflicht, auch den herangewachsenen Söhnen ein sorgenloser Vater zu sein. Das Ende für die ganze Familie war schrecklich! Diese Elische Pädagogik ist auch in unsere Gemeinden eingedrungen, und die Folgen machen sich sehr bemerkbar. Sehr up to date, aber sehr unbiblisch, unchristlich! Ganz anders der Vater der Gläubigen. Vor unsern Augen steht

### Abraham, der treu sorgende Vater.

1. Er sorgt dafür, daß Isaac eine passende Gattin bekomme.
2. Er ist gewiß, Gott wird's walten.
3. Er gibt Anweisung, daß Isaac im Lande der Verheißung bleiben soll.

#### 1.

B. 1—4. Der feierliche Auftrag. Abraham war nun 140 und Isaac 40 Jahre alt. Doch er dachte nun nicht etwa so: Ich habe in meinem Leben viel Sorge und Mühe gehabt, habe Isaac herangezogen bis zum reifen Mannesalter; er kennt die Wege des Herrn und ist alt genug, für sich selbst zu sorgen. Ich bin alt und müde. Mein Sohn ist ein reicher Mann, und wer Geld hat, kann gut vorankommen und eine reiche, ihm ebenbürtige Frau bekommen. Alle Häuser der höchsten Gesellschaft stehen ihm offen; Fürstentöchter greifen mit beiden Händen zu. Nicht so! Trotz seines Alters liegt es ihm sehr am Herzen, daß Isaac eine passende Gattin bekomme. Was hilft aller Segen Gottes, wenn Isaac durch eine Frau, wie oft geschehen, z. B. bei Salomo, gottentfremdet wird? Elieser, seinen Verwalter, dem er früher all seinen Reichthum zugebracht hatte, gibt er in feierlichster Weise den Auftrag, für seinen Sohn um eine Gattin zu werben. Er fordert einen Eid von ihm. Das äußerliche Zeichen — jetzt: Hand oder Finger aufheben — hier: Hand unter die Hüfte legen (Luther: „in welcher Christus war“). Es muß aber, wenn er es wußte, für ihn betäubend gewesen sein, daß selbst seine Verwandten im Götzendienste lebten. Vgl. 31, 19. — Die Eltern sind noch heute Gottes Stellvertreter. Wie Gott dem Adam eine Gehilfin zuführte, so will er das heute noch durch die Eltern tun. Im ganzen Alten Testament war das die Regel, und das ist noch jetzt göttliche Regel. Davon ist man heute in der Christenheit weit abgekommen. (Unter Heidenvölkern handelt man nach der Regel.) Auch christliche Eltern überlassen heutzutage das Heiraten leider ganz ihren Kindern; sie fragen wenig danach, ob die Erwählte auch recht gläubig und rechtgläubig ist. Und die jungen Leute unserer Tage meinen, das gehe die „Alten“ gar nichts an; sie brauchen deren Rat und Einwilligung nicht. Leichtsinzig, im Sinnenrausch, schließen sie eine Ehe. Das vierte Gebot und Glaubensunterschiede kommen nicht in Betracht. Ein schönes Gesicht, wenn auch ein gottloses Herz, Geld und ein lustiges Wesen ist vielen genügend. Kein Wunder, daß Ehemeh und Scheidung bald folgt. Eltern, denkt an Abraham, und ihr Kinder, an den vierzig Jahre alten Isaac!

B. 5. Der gewissenhafte Elieser. Gottes Wort hatte eine Stätte in Eliesers Herzen gefunden. Er hatte ein zartes Gewissen. Die ihm auferlegte Verantwortung war schwer. Ein Eid ist



ihm keine bloße Formalität. Ehe er den Eid ablegt, will er genau wissen, wie er in verschiedenen möglichen Fällen handeln soll. Daher die Frage: Soll gegebenenfalls Isaak in die alte Heimat ziehen? Er will keinen Eid in ungewissen Dingen ablegen, denn er fürchtet Gott. — Welch ein Vorbild für viele, die in unsern christlichen Schulen unterrichtet worden sind und eine bessere Erkenntnis haben als Elieser und doch ihm in bezug auf Gewissenhaftigkeit weit nachstehen! Wir wissen, daß jetzt vor Gericht viele falsche Eide geschworen werden, da man den Schwur vielfach als bloße Formsache ansieht. Auch die Eid abnehmenden Beamten bestärken oft die Leute in ihrer Meinung, da sie die Eidesworte so herummeln und herleiern, als sei es die unwichtigste Sache der Welt. Wir wissen auch, wie so gar häufig leichtfertig selbst in unsern Kreisen Schwurworte gebraucht werden, so daß manche fast jeden Satz aus Gewohnheit mit einem "By God" oder dergleichen einleiten oder enden. Wir wissen ferner, daß auch Gemeindeglieder sich verleiten lassen, in ungewissen, unbekannten Dingen Eide abzulegen, z. B. bei Aufnahme in eine Loge. Das sind so recht Herodeseside. Infolge eines solchen Eides fiel das Haupt Johannis des Täufers.

## 2.

B. 7. 8. **Glaubensgewißheit.** Abraham ist fest überzeugt, daß der von Elieser gedachte Fall nicht eintreten wird. Das glaubt er im Vertrauen auf Gottes bisherige Führung und seine wiederholte und durch einen Eid bekräftigte Verheißung. Er glaubt fest, Gott wird auch diese Sache wohl führen. Gott, der ihn zum Stammvater des auserwählten Volkes und des Messias auserwählt hat, wird durch seinen Engel alles im voraus ordnen, so daß Elieser bei der Ausführung seines Auftrags keine Schwierigkeit haben wird. Gott wird, wie er ihn auserwählt hat, auch eine Gattin für seinen Sohn auswählen und diese willig machen, ins Land der Verheißung zu ziehen und einem ihr völlig unbekannten Mann anzugehören. Von B. 10 an sehen wir ja, wie Gott, der Herzenslenker, alles zuborversehen hat. Ja, Rebekka wollte zu dem Mann ins unbekannte Land ziehen wie einst ihr Großonkel, B. 58. — Wie glücklich könnten auch wir sein, wenn wir in Glaubensgewißheit Gott walten ließen, der uns doch so wunderbar und herrlich geführt hat! Unser Sorgen ist umsonst, Ps. 127, 1. 2. Wir verbittern uns damit das Leben. Gott hat schon alles versehen. (Lied 355, 7. 8.) Er sendet auch uns seinen Engel, der den Weg räumt und bereitet, Ps. 34, 8; 91, 11. 12. Sollte Gott, der uns usw. Siehe Röm. 8, 32. — Ja, Gott wird christlichen Jünglingen und Jungfrauen, wenn sie ihn nur walten lassen, das rechte Gemahl zu glücklicher Ehe gewiß zuführen. Viele aber denken anders, nämlich so: „Wenn ich nicht das Tanz- und Theater- und das 'petting'-Unwesen mitmache, finde ich mein Lebtag kein Gemahl. Das sind die Orte und das ist die Weise, wie man heutzutage nur in die Ehe kommen kann.“ Sehr oft eher ins „Wehe“! O die unverständigen

Eltern, die ihre Kinder noch anfeuern, auf diese ungöttliche Weise in die Ehe zu kommen! Wo ist unser Glaube? Jak. 2, 14: So jemand sagt, ja nur sagt, aber nicht hat. Gott aber täuscht das Vertrauen der Seinen nie.

## 3.

B. 6. 8 b. „Unter keinen Umständen!“ Abraham spricht wie erschrocken: „Da hüte dich vor!“ Wie schärft er dies durch nochmalige Wiederholung ein! Der Erbe des Landes muß im Lande bleiben, bis es Gott selbst unter Isaaks Sohn anders fügt, 1 Mos. 15, 13. 14, also nach vorbedachtem Rat. Nicht rückwärts, sondern vorwärts zeigen alle Verheißungen und Führungen Gottes. Gottes Rat ist wunderbarlich, oft unverständlich, aber er führt ihn herrlich hinaus. Davon ist Abraham ganz fest überzeugt. — „Da hüte dich vor!“ gilt auch uns. Tu nichts gegen Gottes Willen und vereitle nicht selbst seine Gnadenverheißungen! Sieh nicht, wie Lots Weib und Demas, hinter dich, zurück in das, woraus Gott dich in Gnaden gerissen hat! Ja nicht zurück in die verdammte Welt, die du verlassen hast! Du Erbe Gottes und Christi, kehre nicht zurück ins Reich der Finsternis, auch dann nicht, wenn selbst dein Weib dich dahin locken oder bringen wollte! Setze nicht eines Weibes oder Mannes wegen dein Heil aufs Spiel! Denke an Luk. 14, 20. Antworte mit Petrus: Joh. 6, 68. 69. Gott wird dir ein Gemahl nach seinem Herzen zuführen.

B. 9. Eliesers Eid. Nun, nachdem sein Gewissen frei ist, legt er freudig den Eid ab, und treulich hat er ihn ausgeführt. Sein Gebet, B. 12—14; sein Dank, B. 27; sein Eifer, B. 33; seine Werbung, B. 34—49; seine Eile, B. 56. — Wir haben ein feierliches Gelübde einem größeren und besseren Herrn abgelegt als Elieser: unser Tauf- und Konfirmationsgelübde. Haben wir unserm Herrn auch so Treue gehalten wie Elieser? Sind wir noch — nicht nur äußerlich — Glieder der Kirche des lauterer Wortes Gottes? Leiden wir lieber alles, ja auch den Tod, als daß wir von Gott und seinem Worte abfallen? Wandeln wir würdiglich dem Evangelium in Glauben, Wort und Tat? — Ihr Eltern, sorgt ihr treulich für eure Kinder in dem gefährlichen Alter nach der Konfirmation? Ihr wißt, Satanas hat ihrer begehrt. Oder kümmert es euch nicht, wo sie sind, mit wem sie umgehen, was sie treiben? Arbeitet ihr wohl gar dem Seelforger entgegen, wenn er warnt und mahnt? Denkt an Hebr. 13, 17! Eure Verantwortung ist furchtbar! — Herrlicher Segen aber kommt über alle treu sorgenden Väter und Mütter. (Lied 467, 5. 6.) Wie werdet ihr euch freuen und selig sein, wenn ihr im Hinblick auf eure Kinder die Worte des Herrn anwenden könnt: Joh. 18, 9! Betet täglich: Lied 281, 2.

M. Piehler.

## 1 Mos. 25, 1—10.

Nf. 71, 14—22. So konnte nun Abraham rühmen, loben und bitten. 137 Jahre alt war er beim Abscheiden Saras. Noch fünfundsiebzig Jahre lebte er mit Isaaß, sah dessen spätgeborene Kinder noch fünfzehn Jahre alt werden und konnte sie noch die Wege des Herrn lehren. Es ging ihm aber im hohen Alter noch, wie von Moses geschrieben steht: 5 Mos. 34, 7. Doch er ist in unserm Text schon

## Abraham, der Greis.

1. Im hohen Alter noch geht er eine gesegnete Ehe ein.
2. Er wird versammelt zu seinem Volk.
3. Seine Söhne legen seinen müden Leib in Gottes Acker.

## 1.

B. 1. Ehe im Alter. Mit Sara, der Mitträgerin der Verheißung, stand Retura nicht auf gleicher Stufe. Abraham fühlte sich einsam, da seine inniggeliebte Gattin gestorben war. Er sehnte sich wieder nach einer Gehilfin, die um ihn wäre. — So wollen wir nicht ohne weiteres den Stab über alte Leute brechen, wenn sie sich im Alter noch einmal verheiraten. Sind die Kinder aus dem Elternhaus gegangen, so wird das Haus leer und einsam; oder wenn Vater oder Mutter mit verheirateten Kindern, die ihre eigenen Interessen haben, leben, so sind sie in Wahrheit doch einsam. Die Kinder darf man dafür nicht schelten. Es ist der Natur und dem Willen Gottes, 1 Mos. 2, 24, gemäß. Der gemeinsamen Interessen zwischen Alten und Jungen sind wenig. Die Alten blicken zurück, die Jungen in die Zukunft. Dies hebt aber nicht auf 1 Tim. 5, 4; Eph. 6, 2, 3; Spr. 23, 22; diese Gottesworte gelten bis in der Eltern hohes Alter, da sich dann oft viele Schwächen und Gebrechen zeigen. Auch das bleibt stehen, daß die alten Eltern nicht eifersüchtig auf das Glück ihrer Kinder sehen, sondern desselben sich von Herzen freuen sollen. Doch unterlassen wir lieblose Urtheile über noch im Alter geschlossene Ehen.

B. 2—6. Gottes Segen. Gott selbst zeigt uns, daß diese Ehe ihm nicht mißfällig war, dadurch, daß er seinen Segen zur Ehe gibt. Auf gewisse Ehen hatte Gott im Alten Testament den Glück der Kinderlosigkeit gelegt; vgl. 3 Mos. 20, 20, 21. Gott selbst hatte Abrahams Leib, der schon erstorben war, 17, 17; 18, 12, wieder mit Lebenskraft ausgerüstet und so bis ins hohe Alter erhalten. Vgl. seine Verheißung, Kap. 17, 5. Durch Isaaks, Jakobs, Ismaels und Returas Söhne — welch eine Reihe von Völkern! Returas Söhne waren auch nicht, ebensowenig wie Hagars Nachkommen, in den besonderen Gnadenbund eingeschlossen. Sie wurden meist handeltreibende Araber. Sie erbten auch nicht mit Isaaß, sondern Abraham entließ sie mit reichen Geschenken in das Land nach Osten hin. Wahre Gotteserkenntnis hat



sich noch längere Zeit unter ihnen erhalten. — So können Alte in einer zweiten Ehe noch einen glücklichen Ehestand führen, sich gegenseitig das Alter verschönen, indem sie gemeinsamen Interessen leben, einander pflegen und tragen. Freilich in sehr vielen Fällen schlagen solche Ehen in großes Weh um. Alter schützt vor Torheit nicht. Es kommt auf die Beweggründe, den Charakter und vor allem auf den wahrhaft christlichen Sinn beider sowie auf Gottes Gnade an, wenn eine im Alter geschlossene Ehe wohl geraten soll.

## 2.

B. 7. 8. Seliger Heimgang. Luther: „Das ist eine schöne und liebliche Beschreibung der Unsterblichkeit.“ 175 Jahre alt ist der Erzbater geworden, und auch von seinem Leben gilt Ps. 90, 10 und, wenn auch nicht in vollem Maß, seines Enkels Wort, 1 Mos. 47, 9, aber auch Ps. 71, 21—23. Ein überaus reiches Leben geht zu Ende. Abraham kann wohl sagen: 2 Tim. 4, 7. 8. Allmählich nahmen seine Kräfte ab; er hielt Feiertabend; war lebensfatt. Er schickte seine Seele dahinein, wo er ewig wünschte zu sein, Phil. 3, 20. 21, und Jakob hat von ihm gelernt zu beten: 1 Mos. 49, 18. Lebensfatt hier, aber hungrig nach dem Leben bei Gott. Dies wurde ihm zuteil. Er wurde versammelt zu seinem Volk, zu den vorsintflutlichen Erzbätern; und sie alle sind nicht tot, sondern leben, Luf. 20, 38. Er schied ab im Glauben an den kommenden Messias, in welchem er gelebt hatte, 1 Mos. 15, 6, und „ward froh, daß er seinen Tag sehen sollte, und sah ihn und freute sich“. — Ein schönes Leben: leben in Gott hier, scheiden in Gott von hier, gehen zu Gott und bei ihm sein allezeit! Nicht erst nach langem Nichtsein, sondern: „Wahrlich, heute“ usw., Luf. 23, 43; von nun an, Offenb. 14, 13; gar nicht sterben, sondern weiterleben der Seele nach, Joh. 11, 26; 8, 51; Apost. 7, 58; eingehen zum Volke Gottes aus allen Völkern, Offenb. 7, 13—17; Lied 397, 4. 5. Das meinen wir auch alles, wenn wir die siebte Bitte vor Gott bringen. Aber nur wenn Matth. 24, 13 anwendbar ist. Ein seliges Ende des Glaubens, wenn einer nach Lied 84, 10 abscheidet; ein solcher „stirbt wohl“. Gott lasse in Gnaden unser Ende so sein!

## 3.

B. 9. 10. Ins Schlafkammerlein. Die Seele lebt, der Leib schläft, sagt die Schrift von den Kindern Gottes. Der Herr selbst nennt das Sterben der Seinen so, Joh. 11, 11; Matth. 9, 24. Liebli- ches Wort, wenn wir auf den Leib, die Hütte der Seele, blicken, 2 Petr. 1, 14; 1 Thess. 4, 13. Wir sagen schriftgemäß von den uns vorange- gangenen Lieben, daß sie im Herrn entschlafen sind. Abraham wird nun von seinen Söhnen Isaak und dem wieder versöhnten Ismael in das Schlafkammerlein gelegt, das er sich bei Lebzeiten selbst angelegt hatte, und zwar neben Sara. Da ruht nun sein Leib bis an den großen Morgen von des Tages Last und Hitze, um dann herrlich aufzustehen, wie er fest glaubte, Hebr. 11, 19, und ihm nach Hiob, Kap. 19, 25—27. —

Das vertreibt auch uns des Todes Bitterkeit und Grabesnacht, wenn wir am Sterbebett unserer Lieben stehen oder uns selbst darauf legen. Schlafkammer und auferstehen; Gottesacker, herrlich aufblühen! Ja, „ich glaube eine Auferstehung des Fleisches“. Herrlicher Christenglaube, unwandelbare Gotteswahrheit! Kein Wunder, daß die Märtyrer so fröhlich in den Tod gingen und die Christen deren Todestag als Geburtstag feierten. Ihr Glaube sah die Herrlichkeit Gottes. — So hat unser Vater Abraham gelebt, geglaubt, gelitten, ausgekämpft und die Krone des Lebens empfangen. Bald werden wir ihn sehen. Folgen wir doch, als rechte geistliche Kinder, ihm nach im Glauben und Leben; dann wird auch unser Ende sein wie das Ende dieses großen Gerechten. Hat sich unser Lauf geendet, dann, selig, herrlich, geschieht: Lied 271, 3. Amen; ja, es soll also geschehen! R. Piehler.

## The Catechism During the Church-Year 1928-29.

1. Sun. in Adv.	Christ Our King	Matt. 21, 1—9
2. Sun. in Adv.	“From thence He shall come . . . and the dead”	Acts 10, 42 b
3. Sun. in Adv.	Christ Our Prophet	Deut. 18, 15
4. Sun. in Adv.	“And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord”	1 John 5, 20 b
Christmas	“Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost . . . Virgin Mary”	Luke 1, 35
2. Christmas Day	The God-man	Rom. 9, 5
Sun. aft. Christmas	The Gospel	John 3, 16
New Year	The Name Jesus	Luke 2, 21
Epiphany	The Name Christ	Acts 10, 38 a
1. Sun. aft. Epiph.	Christ's Fulfilment of the Law	Luke 2, 41—52
2. Sun. aft. Epiph.	Marriage (Table of Duties, 5.6)	John 2, 1—11
Septuages. Sun.	Creation	Gen. 1, 1
Sexages. Sun.	Man (incl. Preservation and Government)	Ps. 139, 14
Quinquages. Sun.	Natural Man (spir. blindness)	Luke 18, 31—43
1. Sun. in Lent	The Holy Scriptures	Matt. 4, 4 a
2. Sun. in Lent	Faith (“I believe”)	Matt. 15, 21—28
3. Sun. in Lent	The Devils	Luke 11, 14—28
4. Sun. in Lent	The Angels	Ps. 103, 20. 21
5. Sun. in Lent	Christ Our High Priest	Ps. 110, 4
Palm Sun. (Confirm.)	Baptism	Gal. 3, 26. 27
Maundy Thursday	The Lord's Supper	1 Cor. 11, 23—29
Good Friday	“Suffered under Pontius Pilate, . . . and buried”	Is. 53
Easter	“He descended into hell; . . . from the dead”	1 Pet. 3, 18 b. 19
Easter Monday	The Resurrection of the Body	Job 19, 25—27
1. Sun. aft. Easter	Absolution	John 20, 19—31
2. Sun. aft. Easter	The Ministerial Office (Table of Duties, 1)	John 10, 11—16
3. Sun. aft. Easter	The Purpose of the Law	1 Pet. 2, 11—20
4. Sun. aft. Easter	Sin	1 John 3, 4
5. Sun. aft. Easter	“Our Father who art in heaven” (Of Prayer in General; Table Prayers, Morning and Eve- ning Prayers)	Matt. 6, 9

Ascension Day	"He ascended into heaven . . . of God the Father Almighty"	Mark 16, 19
Exaudi	"For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory," etc.	Matt. 6, 13 b
Pentecost	Regeneration	John 3, 3. 6
Whitmonday	The Church	Eph. 2, 19—22
Trinity	"I believe in God"	Matt. 28, 19
1. Sun. aft. Trin.	The First Commandment	Ex. 20, 2—5 a
2. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Second Commandment	Ex. 20, 7
3. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Third Commandment (Table of Duties, 2)	Ex. 20, 8—11
4. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Fourth Commandment (Table of Duties, 7—11)	Ex. 20, 12
5. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Fifth Commandment	Ex. 20, 13
6. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Sixth Commandment	Ex. 20, 14
7. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Seventh Commandment	Ex. 20, 15
8. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Eighth Commandment	Ex. 20, 16
9. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Ninth and Tenth Commandments	Ex. 20, 17
10. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Close of the Commandments	Ex. 20, 5 b. 6
11. Sun. aft. Trin.	The First Petition	Matt. 6, 9 b
12. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Second Petition	Matt. 6, 10 a
13. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Third Petition	Matt. 6, 10 b
14. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Fourth Petition	Matt. 6, 11
15. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Fifth Petition	Matt. 6, 12
16. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Sixth Petition	Matt. 6, 13 a
17. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Seventh Petition	Matt. 6, 13 b
18. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Law (Table of Duties, 13)	Matt. 22, 34—40
19. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Forgiveness of Sins	Rom. 3, 22 b—25 a
20. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Cause of Unbelief	Matt. 22, 1—14
21. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Catechism at the Family Altar (Luther's headings)	John 4, 53 b
22. Sun. aft. Trin.	The Fifth Petition	Matt. 18, 23—35
23. Sun. aft. Trin.	Church and State (Qu. 40; 91, 1; 142 b, c; 165 b; 184—193; 300—311; Table of Duties, 3. 4)	Matt. 22, 21
24. Sun. aft. Trin.	Life Everlasting	Matt. 9, 24
25. Sun. aft. Trin.	Election of Grace	Matt. 24, 22
26. Sun. aft. Trin.	Eternal Death (Day of Repentance and Humiliation)	Matt. 25, 41
Reformat'n Festival	Luther's Two Catechisms (Preface to the Small Catechism)	1 Cor. 3, 2 a
Mission Festival	The Second Petition	Matt. 6, 10 a
Thanksgiving Day	The Conclusion of the First Article (the Table Prayers)	Ps. 118, 1

NOTE. — The Second and the Fifth Petition are given twice to allow for the pastor's absence from the pulpit. If absent oftener, the pastor may, in several cases, combine two subjects and arrange his preaching program accordingly.

### Six Lenten Sermons on the Exposition of the Second Article.

1. The Redeemer	"I believe that . . . is my Lord"	Gal. 4, 4. 5
2. The Redeemed	"Who has redeemed me . . . creature"	Matt. 18, 11
3. The Redemption	"Redeemed me, purchased, and won me from . . . devil" (or 1 John 1, 7 b; 2 Tim. 1, 10; 1 John 3, 8 b)	Heb. 2, 14. 15



4. The Ransom	"Not with gold ... and death"	1 Pet. 1, 18, 19
5. Purpose of Redemption	"That I may be ... blessedness"	Rev. 5, 9 b
6. Certainty of Redemption	"Even as ... certainly true"	2 Cor. 5, 15

Also other occasions may, of course, be utilized for catechismal preaching, as the following suggestions illustrate:—

*Confessional Addresses:* The Christian Questions and Answers; the General Confession, Qu. 319; Confession before God, before Our Neighbor, before the Confessor; Preparation for Confession, Qus. 318. 305, etc.

*Funeral Sermons:* "That it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth"; "showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments"; Table of Duties, 12; "redeemed from death"; Resurrection of the Body; Life Everlasting; "Thy will be done"; "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"; Infant Baptism, etc.

R. HERRMANN.

(EDITOR'S NOTE.—The celebration of the quadricentennial of Luther's Catechisms is at hand. These suggestions by Pastor Herrmann for a series of sermons on the chief parts of the Small Catechism are published to invite comment.)

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## Book Review.

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**The Church at Corinth.** A Picture of the True Church of To-Day. By *Prof. John Theo. Mueller, Th. D.* Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 139 pages, 7½×5. Price, \$1.25.

At the close of the sessions of the Western District of the Missouri Synod the committee on resolutions recommended the publication of Professor Mueller's essay—read in part before this body—in its original and complete form. The District acted according to this recommendation, and here we have the timely and practical exposition of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, not as a comprehensive commentary of this letter, but as a book of lessons for the true Christian Church of our day, showing her that she should imitate the Church at Corinth, 1. in preaching the message of Christ crucified and 2. in applying that message to the life of its members. In the second part the following topics are thoroughly treated: Church Factions, Their Cause and Their Cure; Church Discipline and Excommunication; Litigation Among Church-Members; Warning Against the Abuse of the Body; Instruction Regarding Marriage; Christian Liberty and Forbearance; Proper Decorum at Church Services; Disorders Arising from Disregarding Holy Communion; Spiritual Gifts, Their Nature and Their Use. This array of topics, which, in their subheads, are clearly and logically treated, convince the reader at first sight of the value of this book.

**Christian Day-Schools in Our Congregations.** An essay delivered before the twenty-sixth convention of the California and Nevada District of the Missouri Synod at Long Beach, Cal., July 6—12, 1927, by *Rev. E. J. Rudnick*, of Fresno, Cal. 51 pages, 9×6. Price, 35 cts.

The essayist handles his subject in a most straightforward way, especially in noting the two incongruous facts: A. Practically unanimous conviction in the Missouri Synod that the Christian day-school is the best means of giving our children a thorough Christian education; B. Yet the majority of congregations in the Missouri Synod have no Christian day-schools; and then, in stating the reasons for this incongruity. The second chief part of the essay points the way towards establishing schools and improving such as already exist. May all our congregations which have no parish-schools carefully and prayerfully weigh the message of Pastor Rudnick, and may the remainder heed his advice regarding improvement of their schools!

**The Concordia Organist.** A Volume of Hymn Preludes. Compiled by *J. H. F. Hoelter*. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 74 pages, 12½×9. Price, \$2.00.

The compiler states in the brief preface: "Our chief aim has been to provide preludes suitable for any church service, simple enough for the beginner, yet interesting enough to engage the attention, possibly also to invite the elaboration, of the experienced organist." Suitable, indeed, they are, the reviewer must agree, and he hopes congregations will purchase this collection for their organist.

**Happy School Days.** By *Margaret E. Sangster*. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 271 pages, 7¼×5. Price, \$1.25.

Concordia Publishing House has obtained the copyright for this delightful book by Margaret E. Sangster, who understands how to approach and convince the schoolgirl, touching upon questions that arise in her life, as punctuality, perplexing studies, the unpopular teacher, the care of school-books, house duties, the art of cooking, and many others. A few portions of the book read casually at once whet the appetite for more.

**Something Better than Advice — POWER!** By *Martin S. Sommer*. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Price, 5 cts.; dozen, 36 cts.; 100, \$2.50, plus postage.

The folly of the well-known recipe, "Be good and do right," and the value of the Gospel of Christ are set forth in this tract — a message sorely needed.

**Olavus Petri and the Ecclesiastical Transformation in Sweden (1521—1552).** By *Conrad Bergendoff, M. A.* The Macmillan Company, New York. 264 pages, 7½×5¼. Price, \$2.50.

Research work, from all appearances, of a thorough kind, in the university libraries of Upsala and Lund, in the Royal Library at Copenhagen, in the university and royal libraries of Berlin has enabled the author, who "has been occupied for the last ten years principally with Reformation studies," to acquaint American readers with a man who is hardly known in this country. Hence, little is known also of the activities of Gustavus Vasa and Laurentius Andreae, two prominent figures in this same period. The sources available to the author are not at our disposal, but the reading of his monograph has afforded us distinct pleasure. Some historical errors have crept in. On page 68 it is said that Thomas Cajetan was the cardinal legate to "the Reichstag at Worms" (Augsburg), that Cajetan attempted "to persuade Luther to recant especially Thesis 58, which concerned papal authority." Thesis 58 of Luther's Ninety-five Theses does not even faintly hint at papal authority, nor was Luther at this time troubled at all about this question. (Cp. Dau, *The Great Renunciation*, p. 161; Luther's Works, St. L. ed., XVIII, col. 77.) Referring to a remark to thesis 97 of Luther's *Disputatio contra Scholasticam Theologiam*, we refer to Luther's Works, St. L. ed., XVIII, col. 27.

B.

**Fifteen Sermons by Henric Schartau.** Translated by *S. G. Hagglund*. Augustana Book Concern Rock Island, Ill. 16 pages, 5½×7¾. Price, \$1.25.

Schartau was one of the really great men of the Swedish Lutheran Church and one of the great preachers of his age. He was at the height of his career about the year 1800. Trained in pietistic theology, he never quite overcame the handicaps which that involved, but accepted Luther as his great exemplar and as a result spoke with assurance and authority on the great facts of Christian salvation. The present volume contains a selected number of sermons dealing with the Order of Grace. They are mainly evangelistic, treating such subjects as Repentance, Awakening, Regeneration, Conversion, Preservation. There is a brief, but excellent biographic sketch, which fittingly calls to mind the achievements of this great Swedish theologian.

G.